



The Absentee  
Maria Edgeworth

Published in 1812, "The Absentee" by Maria Edgeworth examines social injustice in 19th-century Britain. At that time, the management of many Irish estates suffered from the absenteeism of their Anglo-Irish landlords. We meet Lord and Lady Clonbrony. Lord Clonbrony struggles with debt, while Lady Clonbrony tries to shed her Irish connections and earn status in London's high society (known as "the ton.") Meanwhile, their son, Lord Colambre, is wary of the entanglements of that society and escapes to the family estate in Ireland, where he discovers the abuses that have arisen in the family's absence.

Maria Edgeworth was a pioneer of realism in fiction, and one of the most successful and popular novelists of her time. She offered satirical portraits of society manners and sympathetic treatment of regional life. Her work won admiration from authors such as Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott. "The Absentee" is named in the reference list "1001 Books You Must Read Before You Die." - Summary by Bruce Pirie

Read by Bruce Pirie. Total running time: 11:21:09

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